

Supervising for Performance

Module 4: Making it Happen: Application & Enhancement of Skills – 2½ Days

The final two and one-half days of the Supervising for Performance Series is designed to promote and cement the application of the skills learned and practiced in the previous sessions. The supervisory series is designed to teach effective tools and techniques, but the ultimate aim of the series is to improve the performance of California State Supervisors and the teams they supervise. The last 2½ days of the series are designed to enable supervisors to use their time to maximum effect, to use meetings to accomplish results rather than generate activities, and to lead remotely-located teams. Finally, supervisors will spend time drafting and finalizing an action plan for implementing their newly found skills to build high performing teams and departments.

Unit 1: Time Management

A Systems Approach to Achieve Work/Life Balance

Unit Goal: Increased ability to get more done in less time and balance personal and professional responsibilities.

Time Systems

1

Time Chart – If we have financial budgets to manage our money, then why don't we have time budgets to manage our time? A Time Chart is a way to create a time budget, and the first step is to figure out what goes in it.

ASAP – Now that we're equipped with a Time Chart, let's consider how to use it in the real world. Your activities are still general. On a daily basis, you need to decide the specifics of each of those activities (i.e., which letters to write, which sports function on Saturday). These choices are your daily to-do's, and the process for figuring out which ones to let go, which ones to focus on, and how to get them done is what this section is about.

The name of this process is ASAP, which is an acronym for the main steps: Ask, Shrink, Assign, and Preserve. Your Time Chart and ASAP will guide you through the confusion and crises you encounter daily.

Key Principles

2

Stephen Covey wrote, “Simple, clear purpose and principles give rise to complex and intelligent behavior.” We consider four principles that, if ignored, could be to one’s detriment.

- Urgent vs. Important
 - All of our work and personal activities have some degree of importance or urgency. They generally fall into one of four categories.
 - Important and urgent
 - Important but not urgent
 - Urgent but not important
 - Neither important nor urgent
- Pareto
 - Vilfredo Pareto, a 19th century scholar, discovered that in any set of elements the critical elements usually constitute a minority of the set. Over the years, this concept has evolved into the so-called 80-20 rule: 80 percent of the value comes from 20 percent of the items.
- Goals
 - There is simply no substitute for goals, and if you do nothing else with this unit, write a mission statement and support it with SMART goals.
- Sowing & Reaping
 - “What you sow is what you reap” is an agricultural principle that is universal and very relevant to every aspect of life, including time management.

Tips and Tricks

3

This section is about beating common time-wasters. Participants consider tips and tricks for beating the top five time-wasters and then work in teams to come up with some of their own tip and tricks.

- Drop-in visitors
- Phone interruptions
- Doing everything yourself
- Procrastination
- Unclear priorities

Your Challenges

4

The final and longest exercise of the day addresses the participants’ own challenges. After writing everyone’s challenges on flipcharts (usually about 10-11), participants walk around the room and write down ways to address each challenge. The results are entered in MS Word and sent to participants.

Unit 2: Meeting Facilitation

Curing Meeting Nausea

Unit Goal: Participants will increase their ability to lead meetings that stay focused and get results.

Essentials

1

In this section, we lay the groundwork for this unit by covering four essentials:

- What is facilitation?
- What is a facilitator?
- A paradox and an opportunity
- Characteristics and responsibilities of facilitators

Meeting Preparation

2

Facilitators may not do all of the preparation, but they are responsible for all of the results. The quality of your meetings is a reflection of your leadership as the facilitator, and preparation is key. Participants work together to create planning checklists (before, during, and after the meeting) and define meeting roles (participants, facilitator, leader, recorder, timekeeper, etc.).

The Facilitation Process

3

Knowing and using a standard process is fundamental to the facilitator's success. The process suggested for facilitating meetings has four main steps:

1. Priming - Get the "creative juices" flowing in order to work effectively and think creatively. (Inclusion)
2. Probing - Explore problems, options, or ideas in order to start gathering information. (Information base)
3. Pointing - Evaluate and prioritize in order to narrow the focus. (Analysis)
4. Planning - Reach a decision and prepare to move forward in order to implement decisions. (Resolution)

Each step involves a set of tools for accomplishing the step's objectives:

1. Prime – Credit Cards, Mindtrap, Squares, Taking off Blinders
2. Probe – Brainstorm, Brainwrite, Fishbone
3. Point – Ranking, Rating Scales, Consensus Debriefing
4. Plan – Charting, Force Field Analysis

Group Dynamics

4

We focus on the dynamics of working with people. Mastering the tools in this section will help us to balance people and process and to avoid common dysfunctional group behaviors.

- Adult interaction
- Group/meeting types
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Managing normal conflict

Facilitation Techniques

5

The techniques in this section are primarily a collection of tricks that facilitators learn through experience. While experience is probably the best teacher, the pain of some experiences should be avoided. Facilitation is a skill that takes months, if not years, to develop. Meanwhile, applying this section right away will help you to avoid some of facilitation's biggest and most painful mistakes.

- Loss of focus: facilitator bias, sidebars, violating ground rules, boredom, emotions
- Seven deadly sins of facilitation

Unit 3: Leading Organizational Change

Helping others through the human side of change

Unit Goal: Participants will increase their ability to lead the way and set the example when change threatens others.

The Nature of Change

1

The nature of change has beguiled philosophers for centuries—"Nothing endures but change" declared Heraclitus over 2500 years ago. Change *has* endured, but surely the pace and scope of it in the business world has increased. Understanding the nature of change is the first step toward dealing with it.

- Organizational vs. human change:
- Becoming Change-able: Change is inevitable—are you?
- Models of Change: Kurt Lewin, William Bridges, Mel Gibson
- Three stages of change: Melt, Move, Mold

Melt

2

In order to move on and make the transition from the current state to the future state, it is necessary to Melt. Old ways must disappear and new ways embraced. It isn't that the old ways are bad, but change is inevitable, and if we are to change with it, we must melt our resistance.

This stage in human change involves:

- Understanding what is changing
- Acknowledging what is lost
- Appreciating what is gained
- Leaving behind the old way of doing things

Move

3

In order to progress from the current state to the future state, it is necessary to Move. Having identified the change you and your people are going through, and the resulting impact, you can address the second stage of human change.

As the middle phase of personal change, Moving is an in-between time with several resulting challenges.

- Ambiguity/Confusion
- Anxiety
- Vulnerability

Mold

4

In order to secure the changes you have worked hard to implement, it is necessary to Mold. The purpose of melting resistance to change and moving with it was to reach a new state, a new order. Now that you have arrived, the new order must be solidified in order to avoid going back to the old order.

- Regard the new order
- Acknowledge the accomplished changes
- Validate the new
- Take "baby steps" at first

Unit 4: Off-site Supervision

Supervising Geographically Separated Team Members

Unit Goal: Address the unique challenges of supervising employees who work at remote locations. We can do this through remote supervision techniques relative to communication, relationships, and performance management.

Communication

1

Good communication is a critical skill every supervisor should master. In the context of remote supervision, it is the most critical skill. Technology has made this easier, but distance still makes the task difficult. As with any skill, it must be learned and practiced to be effective.

Many co-located supervisors rely on face-to-face interaction, nonverbal communication, and personal rapport in order to communicate with employees. For distance supervisors, however, those options are limited or nonexistent. Email, cell phones, file sharing, the Internet, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and other modern techniques and technologies are excellent communication tools available to distance supervisors.

Relationships

2

Having a good relationship with your staff is more important than being physically close. Properly cultivated, a remote relationship can be just as strong as a local relationship.

Being an effective remote supervisor is about making a solid connection through Take-10 Check-in (i.e., three questions in ten minutes: “How are you, how’s the team, and what can I do to help?”), regular meetings, and team building.

Performance Management

3

A major concern for many supervisors, but especially distance supervisors, is how to control distance workers. Often, supervisors resort to micromanaging because they’re convinced employees won’t be productive if they are not present.

How do you manage people remotely without micromanaging? How do you get the performance you need and expect if you can’t be there to make sure the right things are happening? The old-school answer is more control, but that’s not usually the right answer. The new-school answer is empowerment (see *Team Development* and *Supervisor as Leader* units) and coaching (see *Coaching* unit and the tips below).

Phone Coaching Tips (Use with the *Coaching* unit)

1. Be fully present; pay 100% attention to the phone (no email or other distracting activities)
2. Listen with eyes closed. Listen for tone, inflection, silence and pace of breathing.
3. Match your behavioral style to the style of the person. What is their style of communication? (DISC is one of many work-style assessments a supervisor can use.)
4. Don’t worry about missing body language. It’s true that body language can be a helpful tool, but if you strengthen your listening skills, you will be effective anyway.
5. Phone coaching requires asking more questions to check out where a person truly is.
6. Practice this high level of listening in all interactions, not just phone coaching. Practice when there is no pressure.

7. Have outstanding phone equipment and optimum surroundings. Use a good-quality head set if possible, and make sure that you are situated in a quiet, confidential space.
8. Allow the person to be comfortable and prepared. Ask the person prepare by sending a brief written checklist on what you plan to discuss. Have the person include the issue they are facing and how they think you can help.
9. If a situation calls for corrective feedback, don't provide the coaching during the teleconference while a team member's peers are listening in. Follow-up individually after the call to provide the feedback and to have the coaching discussion.
10. Respond to subtleties and nuances. Supervising across miles demands constant vigilance on the part of the leader to watch for clues that will tell him or her when to step in and coach.

Unit 5: Action Planning

Getting the Most from the Series

Unit Goal: Enable participants to apply what they have learned from the *Supervising for Performance* series. Applying concepts from the *Supervising for Performance* series to the job is one of the greatest opportunities for learning. This unit involves three steps.

Review

1

Participants work in teams to recall the major topics, skills, tips, and techniques from the series.

Barriers

2

Participants work in teams to generate a list of barriers to applying the series back on the job and to generate a list of ways to overcome the barriers.

Top Actions

3

Participants work individually to create three top actions they will take within one week from today's Action Planning unit.